

Six years ago this month, in June 2001, Tropical Storm Allison hit Southeast Texas. Until Hurricane Katrina, this storm would become the costliest tropical storm in U.S. history. Flash flooding initiated quite rapidly during Houston's rush hour late Friday afternoon and on into the evening hours. Widespread street flooding was the initial threat, but the high rainfall amounts forced almost all the major Houston area bayou systems into severe flooding, with some to record levels. All major freeways in the Houston area were severely flooded at at least one location during this event. During this single event alone, rainfall in Harris County ranged from just 2 inches in the extreme west to in excess of 20 inches over Green's Bayou in the east. Countywide, the average rainfall was 8 inches with over two-thirds of the county receiving over 10 inches.

The total damage across Southeast Texas approached \$5 billion (\$4.88 billion in Harris County alone). Twenty-two deaths were caused by Allison, with each of these fatalities occurred in Harris County. At this time, thunderstorms began to train and merge across the Houston metro area, and the system evolved into a powerful complex right over the most populated portion of our CWA that evening. This complex progressed south and east into the early morning hours of Saturday, June 9. Very heavy rainfall was observed for up to 10 hours in some locations, and rainfall rates of 4 inches or more per hour were observed throughout the night. A station in northeast Houston recorded over 26 inches of rain in almost 10 hours.

In response, the Tropical Storm Allison Recovery Project was launched. TSARP is a joint study effort by the Federal Emergency Management Agency, FEMA, and the Harris County Flood Control District, the District. The purpose of the TSARP project is to develop technical products that will assist the local community in recovery from the devastating flooding, and provide the community with a greater understanding of flooding and flood risks. The end product of the study is new Flood Insurance Rate Maps.

TSARP mission statement is: To assist residents of Harris County in recovery from Tropical Storm Allison and minimize damages from future floods by investigating the flood event and by developing current, accurate, and timely flood hazard information.

TSARP used state-of-the-art technology. TSARP has yielded many products that will help us better understand our flood risk. These products will assist citizens in making important decisions, and will assist public agencies in infrastructure planning. The hoped for end result of TSARP is a more informed and disaster resistant community and one that is better prepared.

Purchasing flood insurance before June 18 allowed people to "grandfather" their existing floodplain status and pay lower premiums for flood insurance. Once the maps became official on June 18, residents and business owners whose properties are categorized in higher-risk flood zones on the new maps may pay higher rates.

According to FEMA, a "Regulatory Floodway" means the channel of a river or other watercourse and the adjacent land areas that must be reserved in order to discharge the base flood without cumulatively increasing the water surface elevation more than a des-

ignated height. Communities must regulate development in these floodways to ensure that there are no increases in upstream flood elevations. For streams and other watercourses where FEMA has provided Base Flood Elevations, BFEs, but no floodway has been designated, the community must review floodplain development on a case-by-case basis to ensure that increases in water surface elevations do not occur, or identify the need to adopt a floodway if adequate information is available.

FEMA regulations say "Communities must regulate development in these floodways to ensure that there are no increases in upstream flood elevations." The City of Houston interprets that as no development within the floodway. This is not necessarily correct. Construction can take place but it cannot obstruct the water. Elevating the structure gets the same effect but the city denies this as they said (debris may collect under the structure). They will only allow a remodeling permit if the improvements do not exceed 50 percent of the structures value.

There is one neighborhood along White Oak Bayou that is greatly affected. The homes are of higher value than most of the district. Alternatives to resolve their issue includes widening the bayou or diverting floodwater.

The Harris County Flood District is now investigating these alternatives. Otherwise, the only solution would be a change in the city's ordinance allowing construction in the floodway.

I am looking forward to working with colleagues on the Energy and Water Appropriations Subcommittee to explore ways and means of resolving this problem so that Houstonians will not be forced out of their homes and unable to afford flood insurance.

Mr. Chairman, let me provide this partial listing of some of the many good provisions in this legislation. First, H.R. 2641 will improve U.S. waterways and flood protection by increasing funding for the Army Corps of Engineers by \$713.4 million above the President's request to address a \$1 billion backlog of operations and needed maintenance. This backlog needs to be addressed to sustain the coastal and inland navigation infrastructure critical to the U.S. economy, and the gaps in flood protection highlighted in Hurricane Katrina.

Second, the legislation will help reduce dependence on foreign oil and cut greenhouse gas emissions. Renewable energy and energy efficiency programs are funded at \$1.9 billion—a 50 percent increase in energy efficiency and renewable energy programs. This is in addition to the additional \$300 million added in the FY 2007 joint resolution. In contrast, the President's FY 2008 request for renewable energy and energy efficiency research is the same as it was in 2001 in real terms.

Funding for research and development of alternative fuels such as corn based and cellulosic ethanol and biodiesel is increased by 40 percent above the President's request. Solar Energy demonstration projects receive a 34 percent increase above the President's request. There is also \$22 million to research new ways of generating power from water flow, and \$44.3 million for geothermal energy, neither of which were funded in the President's request. (This is on top of the \$95 million for upgrades to existing hydropower dams funded under the Army Corps.)

I could go on and on. This thoughtful legislation provides funding to invest in new vehicle technology; energy efficient buildings; weatherization; carbon capture and sequestration; and climate change science. And it cuts wasteful spending as well.

For example, H.R. 2641 directs the Energy Department to develop a concrete plan to improve its contract management. The Energy Department has been on the GAO list of programs that are at high-risk for waste, fraud, abuse and mismanagement for seventeen years in a row.

The bill also cuts Global Nuclear Energy Partnership, GNEP, funding by \$285 million below the President's request and \$47.5 million below 2007 for this initiative to reprocess spent nuclear fuel and burn long-lived radioactive materials. There are concerns that this project is unsafe, will cost tens of billions of dollars, and could make it far easier for terrorists to obtain plutonium to make nuclear weapons.

The bill also secures substantial savings by cutting wasteful and unnecessary nuclear weapons programs by \$5.9 billion, \$632 million below the President's request and \$396 million below 2007. It cuts to 37 specific weapons program accounts, including the Reliable Replacement Warhead program. The existing stockpile will continue to provide the Nation's nuclear deterrent for the next two decades, and certainly until the President develops a strategic nuclear weapons plan to transform the nuclear weapons complex away from its expensive Cold War configuration to a more affordable, sustainable structure.

Mr. Chairman, I strongly support H.R. 2641 and urge my colleagues to join me. I thank Chairman VISCLOSKEY for his fine work in bringing this exceptional legislation to the House floor where it should receive an overwhelmingly favorable vote.

Mr. VISCLOSKEY. Mr. Chairman, I move that the Committee do now rise.

The motion was agreed to.

Accordingly, the Committee rose; and the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. ALTMIRE) having assumed the chair, Mr. ANDREWS, Acting Chairman of the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union, reported that that Committee, having had under consideration the bill (H.R. 2641) making appropriations for energy and water development and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2008, and for other purposes, had come to no resolution thereon.

EMMETT TILL UNSOLVED CIVIL RIGHTS CRIME ACT OF 2007

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the title to H.R. 923 is amended so as to read: "A bill to provide for the investigation of certain unsolved civil rights crimes, and for other purposes."

There was no objection.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mrs. LOWEY. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 2764,